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ABSTRACT

This report documents the evaluation of a New York State Incentive Grant that was designed to improve the quality of instruction in New York City schools for students in Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) classes during 1989-90. The program offered 25 hours of staff development training for SIE teachers and related service providers, and 20 hours of in-service professional development for paraprofessionals. The program allowed personnel to design school-based staff development plans based on participant interest inventories as well as provide district-administered mini-courses in specific areas and a full-day conference. The concept of staff empowerment guided the program. Evaluation of the program planning and implementation process and of the training outcomes resulted in six recommendations, including: establishment of clear guidelines concerning the roles of the Central Consultation Committee and the Programmatic Consultation Committees; provision of more training activities on weekends in conference form; and provision of workshops addressing the needs of specific groups. Over 3,000 staff members participated in various SIE training activities (i.e., a college course, school-based training, a SIE conference, and mini-courses). The report details the evaluation methodology, findings, conclusions, and recommendations. (DB)

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OREA Report

STATE INCENTIVE GRANT
DISTRICT 75/CITYWIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1989-90

EC 300 340

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STATE INCENTIVE GRANT
DISTRICT 75/CITYWIDE SPECIAL EDUCATION
STAFF DEVELOPMENT PROGRAM

1989-90

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This Report was prepared by the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment (OREA) of the New York City Board of Education. The evaluation was conducted by the Special Education Evaluation Unit (Ronald C. Miller, Unit Manager). Veronika Raj, Education Officer developed the initial evaluation plan, and the data collection instruments, and was responsible for the supervision of the data collection process, the qualitative and quantitative data analysis, and the production of the final report. Evaluation Consultants, Caryn Luberto, Ruth Margolis, Cindy Rosenberg, Josephine Thorpe, and William Tierney, collected all the data for this evaluation.

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State Incentive Grant
District 75/Citywide Special Education
Staff Development Program
SIG
1989-90

Summary

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the State Incentive Grant (SIG) which was designed to improve the quality of instruction in District 75/Citywide schools for students in Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) classes in the year 1989-90. The SIG program offered 25 hours of staff development training for SIE teachers and related service providers, and 20 hours of in-service professional development for paraprofessionals and IEP mandated DC 37 paraprofessionals. Participation in training was voluntary.

District 75/Citywide designed the 1989-90 SIG program to allow flexibility in content, as well as in delivery and scheduling of staff training. This goal was accomplished by allowing personnel to design school-based staff development plans based on interest inventories which enabled teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers to receive staff development in areas they identified. The program continued to offer to all Citywide school personnel district-administered mini-courses which provided intensive training in specific areas, and again organized a whole-day staff development conference. SIG also made available a limited number of graduate and undergraduate credit bearing college courses to District 75/Citywide staff.

The innovative feature of the SIG staff development program was its philosophy of staff empowerment. The guidelines advanced by the funding source required the SIG staff development program to be a participant driven program. These guidelines stated that a district-wide Advisory Committee must be established by the superintendent to develop the district's overall design and implementation of the program. The District 75 advisory committee (Central Consultation Committee, or C.C.C.) designed a three tier consultative system. This system was comprised of three advisory committees, the C.C.C.; Programmatic Consultation Committees (P.C.C.s); and School-Based Advisory Committees.

The evaluation assessed two major areas: the process of program planning and implementation, and the outcomes of the training. In evaluating the implementation of the SIG program, OREA examined the functioning of the three tier consultative system and issues of organization and facilitation raised by this unique consultative process.

The organizational structure of the C.C.C. changed very little since its establishment. The role of the C.C.C. as originally stated in the SIG funding requirements was ambiguous. In 1989-90, with the appointment of a new superintendent, the lack of guidelines caused some disagreement among committee members. Committee members were divided as to whether resource people were full-fledged members of the committee or permanent guests. The major controversy focused on

whether the committee had final authority for all program issues, or served as an advisory body to the superintendent.

In the 1989-90 school year the organizational structure of the Programmatic Consultation Committees changed. The four-cluster structure of previous years was replaced by 10 committees, one committee for each SIE category from I to VIII, and a committee for Agencies and another for Programs. There was an attempt to make the P.C.C. membership representative of all staff positions, but these efforts were hindered by the relative unavailability of administrative personnel.

The great majority of members interviewed indicated that the P.C.C.'s role seemed rather vague and they voiced a desire for more direction from the C.C.C. Moreover, members of several P.C.C.s reported that their responsibility to channel communication between the C.C.C. and the School-Based Advisory Committees was somewhat hindered by their lack of direct contact with the C.C.C.

In the School-Based Advisory Committees, the shift of responsibility from administrative personnel to school staff continued in 1989-90. Every participating principal reported that his or her role diminished from the year before. Some principals attributed the change to the fact that committee members became more skillful in their work and needed less direction, while others felt that the SIG program was running like a well-oiled machine, requiring less work altogether.

The increased involvement of non-administrative members appeared to be a result of their participation in the Group Processing Workshop conducted in October 1989. Though less than half of the committee members interviewed attended this workshop, 80 percent of those who did attend reported that the session was helpful in clarifying their roles and providing practical information.

The School-Based Advisory Committees appeared to be most active at the planning stage. Members described the role of the committee in developing the school plan as being both administrative and advisory. With few exceptions, respondents described the decision-making process as democratic, based on the results of the interest inventories.

In evaluating staff's participation in the SIG program, OREA found that the great majority (88 percent) of school staff responding (N=2,677) were familiar with the program. Seventy-seven percent of school staff responding reported that they completed the interest inventory. About 59 percent responding participated in some form of SIG training. The largest number attended school-based workshops.

Staff reported that the major reason for not attending certain staff development activities was time constraints. Respondents also cited insufficient information and inconvenient locations as obstacles to their attending the district administered mini-courses and the credit bearing college courses.

The great majority of the respondents (93 percent) found that the SIG staff development activities were useful. Seventy-five percent judged the activities to be useful because the topics were relevant to their particular student populations and they could apply the knowledge they gained to their everyday professional responsibilities. Respondents reported that their knowledge increased significantly.

School-Based Advisory Committee members offered comments and suggestions for the improvement of planning and organization of SIG staff development in the future: a) planning for the School-Based program should begin in the spring of the preceding school year so that implementation could begin in the fall; b) a master list of successful workshop topics and presenters should be provided to all School-Based Advisory Committees; c) a larger selection of credit bearing courses should be made available through the program and offered at more convenient locations; and d) greater attention should be paid to the interests of paraprofessionals and more workshops provided on topics relevant to them.

The conclusions based on the findings of this evaluation lead to the following recommendations.

- Clear guidelines should be established concerning the role of the Central Consultation Committee.
- Clear guidelines should be established concerning the role of the Programmatic Consultation Committees.
- After establishing the Programmatic Consultation Committees, the program should provide training sessions for committee members concerning their roles and responsibilities.
- The Group Processing Workshop should be extended to several sessions in order to accommodate committee members' requests for more practical information about issues arising in the implementation phase of the program.
- In view of the extensive after school responsibilities of personnel, the program should offer more of the activities on weekends in conference form.
- In addition to the joint training activities of teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, the program should provide a number of workshops addressing the specific needs of each of these groups.

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I. INTRODUCTION

This report documents the Office of Research, Evaluation, and Assessment's (OREA's) evaluation of the State Incentive Grant (SIG) which was designed to improve the quality of instruction in District 75/Citywide schools for students in Specialized Instructional Environment (SIE) classes in the year 1989-90.

PROGRAM BACKGROUND

The New York State Commissioner of Education's Part 100 Regulations require that students with handicapping conditions have access to the full range of programs and services to the extent appropriate to their needs. Therefore, teachers must modify instructional techniques and materials to a suitable degree to allow students with handicapping conditions to meet diploma requirements. Professional development is essential to provide special education staff with the knowledge, skills, and positive attitudes that are vital for quality instruction and for compliance with the Part 100 regulations.

The Division of Special Education (D.S.E.) established the SIG program in the 1986-87 school year. In the first year, D.S.E. designed and administered SIG staff development activities as a mandatory five-day staff development program for all eligible special education staff. In the 1987-88 school year, the SIG program underwent a basic philosophical change that brought about subsequent structural changes. In that year, the program embraced the philosophy of staff empowerment, emphasized voluntary staff development activities during non-school hours, and became participant driven. Training options were based on the expressed interest of the school staff and the major thrust of the program was the school-based component which was designed and implemented by the staff.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

District 75/Citywide designed the 1989-90 SIG program to allow flexibility in content, as well as in delivery and scheduling of staff training. This goal was accomplished by allowing personnel to design school-based staff development plans based on interest inventories which would enable teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers to receive staff development in areas they identified. To maximize the opportunities for District 75/Citywide personnel to participate in activities of interest to them, the program continued to offer to all Citywide school personnel district-administered mini-courses which provided intensive training in specific areas, and again organized a whole-day staff development conference. SIG also made available a limited number of graduate and undergraduate courses to District 75/Citywide staff offering practical skills based upon educational research and taught by special education school-based personnel with District 75/Citywide staff-development experience. Additionally, a limited number of schools had the option of participating in special projects or immersion programs.

The SIG program offered 25 hours of staff development training for SIE teachers and related service providers, and 20 hours of in-service professional development for paraprofessionals and IEP mandated DC 37 paraprofessionals. Participation in training was on a voluntary basis.

Consultative Process

The innovative feature of the SIG staff development program was its philosophy of staff empowerment. The guidelines advanced by the funding source required the SIG staff development program to be a participant driven program. These guidelines stated that a district-wide Advisory Committee must be established by the superintendent to

develop the district's overall design and implementation of the program. The guidelines also stipulated the size and composition of the committee: it was to have 12 permanent members, including the superintendent, representatives of the United Federation of Teachers (U.F.T.), Council of Supervisors and Administrators (C.S.A.), District 75/Citywide administrative staff, teachers, related service providers and paraprofessionals selected by the U.F.T. This committee could be supplemented as needed by additional staff whose expertise might be helpful at particular times as determined by the committee.

To provide a truly participant driven program, the District 75 advisory committee (Central Consultation Committee, or C.C.C.) designed a three tier consultative system. This system was comprised of three advisory committees, the C.C.C.; Programmatic Consultation Committees (P.C.C.s); and School-Based Advisory Committees. Each of the three committees had different levels of responsibility. The C.C.C.'s responsibilities were stated in the funding requirements.

The Programmatic Consultation Committees, constituting the second tier of the consultative system, were designed to be parallel to the internal structure of the district which is organized around program service categories. Prior to 1989-90 there were P.C.C.s for each of four clusters of SIE programs: Group I included SIE I, II, III, VI, and XII; Group II included SIE IV and V; Group III included SIE VIIA, VIIB, VII, VIII, and Agency Schools; and Group IV included J47, Hearing and Education Services, Educational Vision Services, Speech Services, and Home and Hospital Instruction. These four committees, composed of District 75 teachers, staff developers, paraprofessionals, principals, and administrative personnel selected in consultation with union representatives reviewed and approved school-based plans and provided a forum for networking.

The structure of these committees changed in the 1989-90 school year. This

change was a response to grassroots demands; the four cluster P.C.C.s were replaced by 10 committees, one committee for each SIE category from 1 to 8, and a committee for Agencies and another for Programs, so that every school in the program service category could send a representative to the committee.

The School-Based Advisory Committees made up the third tier of the system. Each District 75 school formed a SIG School-Based Advisory Committee which designed a school-specific staff development plan. These committees were composed of principals, designees of the principals, U.F.T. chapter leaders, and teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers (selected in consultation with the U.F.T.).

Interest Inventory

Each school was to administer an interest inventory to determine the professional interests of their pedagogical and clinical staff. The SIG staff development program was to be based on these stated professional interests, and the final plans developed by the School-Based Advisory Committees. The aggregated results of the schools' interest inventories would provide the basis for planning programs designed by the district.

Program Plans

The SIG program stipulated that there were to be different types of staff development. The primary component would be school-based. The other components were to be coordinated by District 75 staff developers. Schools generally developed a plan for a minimum of 10 hours of school-based supplemental staff development based on professional interests of the staff as indicated in the interest inventories.

A series of mini-courses were co-sponsored by District 75 and the U.F.T. Program personnel examined the aggregated results of each District 75/Citywide school's interest

inventory and school-based training plans and compiled a list of topics for which high interest was expressed throughout the district but which may not have been the five topics given highest priority in the individual schools. In order to present these topics as mini-courses or workshops, the district conducted a search for staff members with appropriate expertise and a desire to share their knowledge with their colleagues. The mini-courses consisted of five two-hour sessions. In addition to these activities, the program also sponsored the Third Annual Staff Development Conference with 58 presentations in a wide variety of areas.

SCOPE OF THE REPORT

This report describes the functioning of the three tier consultative system, the process of program planning and implementation, and the effectiveness of the school-based staff development activities. It also examines participants' satisfaction with district-administered training activities. The assessment of program planning and implementation is based on the self-reports of School-Based Advisory Committee members; the assessment of program effectiveness is derived from surveying the participants.

Report Format

This report is organized as follows: Chapter II discusses the evaluation methodology. Chapter III describes school program planning, implementation, and participants' perceptions of effectiveness. Chapter IV presents conclusions and recommendations based upon the results of the evaluation.

II. EVALUATION METHODOLOGY

PROGRAM OBJECTIVES

The SIG program is a supplemental staff development program designed to increase special education teachers' instructional competency, enhance paraprofessionals' ability to help students learn, and enable providers of related services to assist students more effectively. Specifically, SIG endeavors to increase teachers', paraprofessionals', and related service providers' knowledge in areas in which they profess an interest.

EVALUATION QUESTIONS

The evaluation assessed two major areas: the process of program planning and implementation, and the outcomes of the training. OREA addressed the following evaluation questions.

Planning and Implementation

- How did the three tier consultative system work?
- How were the School-Based Advisory Committees organized?
- How did the Advisory Committees develop their school plans?
- How did the schools implement their staff development programs?

Outcomes

- Did participants perceive that their knowledge increased as a result of the staff development activities?
- Were participants able to use what they had learned in their classroom and/or professional activities?

- What type of training activities did participants perceive to be most useful for their classroom and/or professional activities?

EVALUATION PROCEDURES

Sample

OREA obtained a stratified random sample of all District 75/Citywide schools by employing the following criteria: number of sites, number and type of program service categories, and the extent of site representation on its School-Based Advisory Committee.

In order to collect data on planning, implementation, and outcomes, OREA collected data from six groups of school personnel. To examine the functioning of the consultative process and clarify issues of organization and facilitation, OREA interviewed all members (with the exception of the Superintendent) of the C.C.C., all available members of the ten P.C.C.s, and members of the School-Based Advisory Committees in the sample schools. Moreover, OREA observed selected P.C.C. meetings and all C.C.C. meetings between December and May.

In order to evaluate how schools developed their plans, how school plans corresponded to the stated needs of staff, and how the schools implemented program activities, OREA interviewed 86 members of School-Based Advisory Committees in the sample schools. The committee members interviewed included 22 school-level administrators (principals, and assistant principals), 20 teachers, 13 related service providers, 17 paraprofessionals, and 14 U.F.T. Chapter Chairs.

In order to evaluate staff awareness of the development and implementation of the SIG program, OREA administered a survey instrument to the entire staff of District 75; 1,090 classroom teachers, 679 paraprofessionals, and 243 related service providers, and 111 people who did not indicate their position returned the questionnaire. This low return

rate suggests a cautious interpretation of the results.

In order to assess participants' reactions to the staff development they received, OREA surveyed participants and obtained their judgments of various training activities. Staff development evaluation forms were distributed to all participants of the Third Annual Staff Development Conference, all seven district-administered mini-courses, and all five graduate and undergraduate credit bearing college courses offered by SIG. Finally, evaluation surveys were also distributed at workshops held in March, April, and May in the sample schools. A total of approximately 7,300 evaluation forms were disseminated, and 42 percent (3,069) were returned, providing responses from participants of 108 workshops. Similar to the staff development questionnaires, the return rate of the evaluation forms suggests a cautious interpretation of the results. The majority of participants responding were teachers (53 percent), 36 percent were paraprofessionals, and the remaining 11 percent included related service providers, administrators, school aides, and school nurses.

Instrumentation

OREA developed semi-structured interview schedules for members of the Central Consultation and Programmatic Committees. This instrument aimed at ascertaining committee members' perceptions of the role of their committees as well as their own responsibilities as committee members.

OREA developed structured, open-ended interview schedules for members of the School-Based Advisory Committees. These interview schedules addressed the following issues: the role of the Advisory Committee; the responsibilities of the committee as well as that of individual members and the changes in these responsibilities, if any, from the

1988-89 school year; the committee's strategy to design and implement the program; and suggestions for future staff development.

In order to assess the staff's awareness of, and satisfaction with the SIG program, OREA staff developed a staff development questionnaire. This survey instrument solicited teachers', paraprofessionals', and related service providers' views about their knowledge of the different aspects of the program, the effectiveness of various techniques publicizing the workshops, and their assessment of the training activities. The survey elicited suggestions for future training efforts and ideas for increasing staff participation.

Finally, OREA designed a staff development survey containing seven close-ended questions about the relevance and applicability of the workshops, the helpfulness of the materials used, and the opportunities for questions and discussion. The form also allowed participants to indicate the extent of their perceived knowledge of the topics before and after training. Participants rated their responses to each question on a six-point Likert scale in which "one" represented the "least" and "six" the "most" satisfaction with different aspects of the training.

Data Collection

OREA staff interviewed members of the Central Consultation Committee from December through May. OREA consultants interviewed members of the Programmatic Committees and the School-Based Advisory Committees at the selected school sites from the second week in December through the end of January. School personnel filled out the staff development questionnaire in February. Participants completed the evaluation surveys after the selected training sessions from February through May: 2,757 surveys were returned by the participants of the Third Annual conference who completed

separate surveys for each session; 40 participants representing two of the mini courses returned the evaluation surveys; 209 participants returned the survey instruments from the sample school-based training activities; and 63 participants in the graduate and undergraduate college courses responded to the survey.

Data Analysis

OREA computed response frequencies on questionnaire items to determine staff members's knowledge of, and participation in the various staff development options. OREA also examined the effects of the participant's position on responses to the questionnaire as well as the survey items regarding satisfaction with the program. OREA computed a *t*-test to determine whether the participants' self-reported knowledge increased significantly as a result of the training. OREA computed analyses of variance (ANOVAs) to determine whether participants rated various SIG training options differently.

III. EVALUATION FINDINGS

In evaluating the implementation of the SIG program, OREA examined the functioning of the three tier consultative system and issues of organization and facilitation raised by this unique consultative process.

THE STRUCTURE OF THE THREE TIER CONSULTATION SYSTEM

Central Consultation Committee

The organizational structure of the committee complied with the guidelines provided by the funding source. The composition of the committee changed very little since its establishment. While a few members were replaced by others, all positions mandated by funding requirements were represented. The committee included the superintendent, his designees, representatives of the U.F.T., C.S.A., District 75/Citywide administrative staff, teachers, related service providers, and paraprofessionals selected by the U.F.T. Several people who previously served as resource personnel became members of the committee.

The Central Consultation Committee met on a monthly basis between September and June to develop the design, plan the implementation of the program, and facilitate implementation on an ongoing basis. The major issues addressed in these meetings were the development of the overall design for the program, school staff's per session activities (Regulation 683) the planning and organization of the Third Annual SIG Staff Development Conference, and development of a preliminary plan for the 1990-91 program. A subgroup of the committee, (District 75 staff developers in cooperation with a U.F.T.-designated resource person), developed drafts of program designs, plans, and organization schedules, and presented it to the committee at meetings. Committee members made

comments, offered suggestions, recommended changes. They reached decisions on most program issues by consensus, with all members contributing to the process according to their expertise; their decisions were subject to approval by the superintendent. The implementation of the approved plans, and the day-to-day operation of the program was the responsibility of District 75 staff developer committee members. In March these staff developers were employed by the SIG program as facilitators.

The role of the C.C.C. as stated in the SIG funding requirements was ambiguous. In the 1987-88 school year, the committee's role was determined by negotiations between the superintendent and the U.F.T. representative of District 75. No official written account of this process is available, and therefore the rights and responsibilities of the committee are subject to interpretation. In 1989-90, with the appointment of a new superintendent, the lack of guidelines became evident, causing some disagreement among committee members. Several interpretations were advanced of the responsibilities of individual committee members and of the role of the committee vis-a-vis the superintendent. Committee members were divided as to whether resource people were full-fledged members of the committee or permanent guests. The major controversy centered on the issue of whether the committee had final authority for all program issues, or served as an advisory body to the superintendent.

Programmatic Consultation Committee

In the 1989-90 school year the organizational structure of the Programmatic Consultation Committees changed. The four-cluster structure of previous years was replaced by 10 committees, one committee for each SIE category from I to VIII, and a committee for Agencies and another for Programs. Each school within a given program

service category sent a representative to the committee. In most cases this representative was also a member of the School-Based Advisory Committee who either volunteered or was designated by the principal or the U.F.T. chairperson to serve on the committee; two people served on all three committee levels (i.e., School-Based, P.C.C. and C.C.C.). There was an attempt to make the P.C.C. membership representative of all staff positions, but these efforts were hindered by the relative unavailability of administrative personnel. Nevertheless, most committees had a good mix of teachers and paraprofessionals and occasionally included related service providers.

The P.C.C.s constituted the second or middle tier of the consultative system. They were established to provide a connecting link between the C.C.C. and the School-Based Advisory Committees: that is, their role was to relay program policies from the C.C.C. to the School-Based Advisory Committees and bring the questions and problems concerning school-based planning and implementation to the C.C.C. Moreover, in their present form, the P.C.C.s were proposed to serve as a forum for networking, discussing common problems, and exchanging ideas for workshops and presenters within each program service category.

The great majority of members interviewed indicated that the committee's role seemed rather vague and they voiced a desire for more guidance and direction from the C.C.C. Moreover, members of several P.C.C.s reported that their responsibility to channel communication between the C.C.C. and the School-Based Advisory Committees was somewhat hindered by their lack of direct contact with the C.C.C. They felt they successfully fulfilled their responsibilities to relay program policies from the C.C.C. to their school-based committees, and their schools benefitted greatly from their participation in the P.C.C. However, they suggested that they could respond to issues brought to them

by members of the School-Based Advisory Committees in a more timely manner if the P.C.C. had a representative on the C.C.C. or a coordinator representing the C.C.C. were assigned to the P.C.C.s.

P.C.C. members reported that they found the mandated general meetings very helpful. They emphasized the value of receiving first hand information about program issues from C.C.C. representatives. They also appreciated the opportunity to share ideas within a P.C.C. with colleagues who work with similar populations. Because of their enthusiasm about the general meetings, half of the P.C.C.s organized at least one additional optional meeting, and approximately one-third held more than one.

School-Based Advisory Committee

The School-Based Advisory Committees were first established in the 1987-88 school year to develop staff-initiated supplementary staff development. At the time, program guidelines stipulated that each committee be representative of all school staff, without defining the members' roles. Since administrative personnel (principals and assistant principals) had the most organizational experience, they provided leadership to the newly organized committees.

In 1988-89, leadership on the School-Based Advisory Committees changed from administrative personnel to school staff. Most principals and assistant principals reported that they functioned in an advisory or consultative role, while the responsibility for planning was assumed by the committees as a whole, or by a non-administrative member of the committee, most often the U.F.T. Chapter Chair. This trend continued in the 1989-90 school year. Every principal who was on the committee reported that his or her role diminished from the year before. Some principals attributed the change to the fact that

committee members became more skillful in their work and needed less direction, while others felt that the SIG program was running like a well-oiled machine requiring less work altogether. In seven out of the 10 sample schools, the U.F.T. representative was the one who assumed primary responsibility for the SIG training plan; the principal's designee took charge in the remaining three schools.

Other non-administrative committee members also became more involved in the planning and implementation process. Their increased involvement appeared to be a result of their participation in the Group Processing Workshop conducted in October 1989. Though less than half of the committee members interviewed attended this workshop, 80 percent of those who did attend reported that the session was helpful in clarifying their roles and providing them with practical information.*

Committee members often assumed different roles reflecting the varying organizational structures of the committees. In some cases, schools with several sites located at a distance from each other or with different school populations organized independent Advisory Committees and programs; other schools in the same situation chose to form a single committee to serve all sites or populations. Also, in some schools, one or two committee members assumed the coordinator role or leadership responsibility, and other members carried out designated tasks; on other committees members worked as a team, sharing responsibilities.

The School-Based Advisory Committees appeared to be most active at the planning stage. Committee members described the role of the committee in developing

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*Some who attended, however, requested that in the future this workshop include more practical, "hands-on" information regarding the planning and implementation of the SIG training program.

the school plan as being both administrative and advisory. With few exceptions, respondents described the decision-making process as democratic, based on the results of the interest inventories. Members reported that the activities they performed most consistently were: distributing and collecting the interest inventories; developing a school plan that met the interests of the staff; recruiting and hiring presenters; scheduling; and publicizing activities. In a few cases committee members reported that part of their job was to familiarize outside presenters with issues that were important to school staff.

In each school, several committee meetings were held during the planning phase. However, once plans were completed, the committee as an organized group ceased to exist. The work of implementation generally was carried out by committee members, working independently and making decisions informally through personal contacts.

Interest Inventory. In contrast to 1988-89 when most committee members in approximately half the sample schools reported that they participated in the distribution and collection of interest inventories, in 1989-90 the overwhelming majority of committee members interviewed performed some part of this task. Moreover, School-Based Advisory Committees utilized several different instruments to assess staff interest: in some schools the standard sample forms prepared by the district were used; in others a shortened version of the same form was administered; in still others the School-Based Advisory Committee developed its own interest inventory limited to topics judged pertinent to the school staff.

Although, committees used numerous methods to ensure staff participation in the interest inventory, such as placing the inventories in every staff member's mailbox and posting follow-up memos, they achieved the best results when they distributed and collected the interest inventories at staff meetings where committee representatives

stressed the importance of every staff member's input and verbally elicited additional information concerning training interests.

Selection of Presenters. A large number of committee members reported that they took part in the selection and recruitment of the presenters. In most cases presenters were chosen from school staff on the basis of their expertise, experience, and willingness to participate. Only one school in the sample relied solely on outside experts. This preponderance of inside presenters could be accounted for by three factors: a) committee members felt the school staff was more receptive to training by their colleagues because they believed that they were best equipped to address issues relating to their particular student population; b) in spite of the efforts made at the Group Processing Workshop to familiarize committee members with the opportunities offered by SIG and/or the procedures to be followed to obtain outside experts, as well as the networking opportunities at the P.C.C. meetings, committee members quite often were not clear about the appropriate channels and methods for locating or hiring them; c) the compensation allowed by SIG guidelines severely restricted the pool of available experts.

Scheduling of Workshops. While School-Based Advisory Committee members took responsibility for scheduling the training activities in most of the schools, in the majority of the cases they made an administrative decision based on the availability of rooms and/or presenters.

Publicity. In keeping with OREA's 1987-88 recommendations, the committees engaged in vigorous publicity to assure staff participation in the program. In most cases, publicity was not the responsibility of one person but a shared effort of all committee members. There were only two schools in which the promotion of SIG activities was delegated to a particular person. In one case it was the U.F.T. chairperson, in the other

it was the principal's designee. Various publicity techniques were employed: posting notices on bulletin boards, distributing fliers to all personnel, and promoting ongoing events through personal contact. Committee members reported that personal interaction was the most effective way to ensure staff participation in the workshops.

Workshop Follow-up. Despite OREA's strong recommendation in 1988-89 to provide immediate "in-house" follow-up subsequent to every workshop, there was little improvement in this procedure in 1989-90; systematic follow-up of the training activities was rare. In fact, fewer than 30 percent of the evaluation sheets provided by OREA for distribution following selected training activities were returned. In some schools, committee members reported that they tried to make sure that at least one committee member attended every workshop in order to ascertain the presenter's competence. The majority of the committees conducted informal follow-up inquires with participants to determine their satisfaction with workshops and to elicit suggestions for the improvement of upcoming events.

Suggestions for Future SIG Staff Development Organization

School-Based Advisory Committee members offered comments and suggestions for the improvement of planning and organization of SIG staff development in the future. They noted with satisfaction that the following suggestions made in 1988-89 were addressed: a) the Group Processing Workshop provided training for committee members concerning their roles, responsibilities, and made them aware of the full range of opportunities offered by the SIG program; and b) SIG provided per-session compensation for committee members for some of their time.

Committee members also commented that the following issues they raised in

previous years were not changed: a) increasing compensation for presenters (i.e., many indicated that the honorarium offered was far too low to attract experts), and b) conducting more activities during school hours.

Committee members offered some additional suggestions for 1990-91: a) planning for the school based program should begin in the spring of the preceding school year so that implementation could begin in the fall; b) a master list of successful workshop topics and presenters should be provided to all School-Based Advisory Committees; c) a larger selection of credit bearing courses should be made available through the program and offered at more convenient locations; and d) greater attention should be paid to the interests of paraprofessionals and more workshops provided on topics relevant to them.

SCHOOL STAFF'S PERCEPTIONS OF THE SIG PROGRAM

Tallying results of the staff development questionnaire (N = 2,677), OREA found that the great majority (88 percent) of school staff responding were familiar with the program. There were no significant differences between teachers and paraprofessionals in this regard (87 and 86 percent respectively). All school administrators, and 95 percent of related service providers knew about SIG. Staff members who were not familiar with the program were excluded from all subsequent analyses. (In the following discussion "respondents" refers to individuals who were familiar with the program [N = 2,323].)

Interest Inventory

Seventy-seven percent of school staff responding reported that they completed the interest inventory. There was no difference between the percent of teachers (83 percent) and related service providers (80 percent) who completed the inventory. However, a significantly lower percentage of paraprofessionals (67 percent) let their interests be known.

Participation in SIG training

About 59 percent (1,361) of the responding staff members participated in some form of SIG training. A small number of staff members (85) reported that they took part in more than one option. The largest number (1,287) attended school-based workshops; 55 percent of the teachers, 62 percent of the paraprofessionals, and 45 percent of the related service providers attended school workshops. Ninety-five people participated in one of the district-administered mini-courses, and 66 took a college course co-sponsored by the program.*

Effectiveness of Publicity

Several publicity techniques proved to be effective. Respondents stated that generally they learned about the SIG activities from announcements at staff meetings (54 percent), or through personal contact with School-Based Advisory Committee members (41 percent). Notices, pamphlets, and booklets distributed to individual staff members were also effective publicity methods: 36 percent of the respondents learned about the available staff development activities through these means. Less than one fourth (24

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*These proportions might not be completely representative of staff participation in the program. Several schools postponed their training efforts until the issues surrounding Chapter 683 were resolved and planned to deliver their workshops in the spring. Moreover, participation can be expected to increase at the end of the school year when staff will have availed themselves of additional district-administered SIG activities including the Third Annual SIG Staff Development Conference. On the other hand, since less than 40 percent of District 75/Citywide personnel returned the survey instrument, it is possible that the respondents were more involved in the program than the general population, and that their reported participation did not reflect the participation of all District 75/Citywide personnel in general. The number of personnel participating in, as well as responding to the survey also differed greatly. The Third Annual Staff Development Conference was attended by over 2,000 people who had the opportunity to participate in three different sessions during the course of he day; the nine mini-courses served approximately 125 people; 87 people participated in the N.Y.S.U.T./U.F.T. E.T.P. college courses.

percent) of the staff members responding relied on school administrators for information about the program. Posted fliers proved to be the least effective means of disseminating program information (22 percent). While there were slight differences in the number of staff members learning about the three training options through the various means of publicity, OREA found that the rank order of the publicity techniques remained the same for all three.

Factors Hindering Participation

Staff reported that the major reason for not attending certain staff development activities was time constraints; 52 percent of the teachers, 37 percent of the paraprofessionals, and 60 percent of the related service providers cited competing personal responsibilities as the reason for their limited participation. Respondents cited insufficient information and inconvenient locations as obstacles to their attending the district administered mini-courses and the credit bearing college courses. Approximately 20 percent claimed lack of information as the reason for not registering for these courses; 18 percent of the teachers, 24 percent of the paraprofessionals, and 15 percent of the related service providers stated that they did not know about particular activities or learned about them too late. Only 11 percent felt that the workshops offered were not relevant to them; 11 percent of the teachers, nine percent of the paraprofessionals, and 14 percent of the related service providers voiced occasional dissatisfaction with the subject matter of the workshops.

Effectiveness of Training Activities

The great majority of the respondents (93 percent) found that the SIG staff development activities they attended were useful. Seventy-five percent of the participants

judged the activities to be useful because the topics were relevant to their particular student populations and therefore they could apply the knowledge they gained to their everyday professional responsibilities. Workshops (courses) which taught new skills were mentioned as beneficial by 58 percent of the respondents. Participants of the School-Based training activities mentioned several additional advantages: 34 percent of them emphasized that the workshops provided opportunities to exchange ideas with other staff members, and 10 percent reported that they learned how to obtain outside assistance for their students and how to develop a better relationship with their students' parents.

PARTICIPANTS' RESPONSES TO SPECIFIC TRAINING ACTIVITIES

Aggregating responses about different types of training activities on the staff development survey, OREA found that the majority of participants judged the workshops to be well-organized, felt that the training was applicable to their everyday activities, described the materials received as helpful, and felt that there was sufficient time allowed to cover the subject matter and to ask questions (See Table 1).

Knowledge Gain

Participants who completed the staff development surveys were asked to indicate the extent of their knowledge of the workshop topic before and after the activity they attended. They reported that their knowledge increased from a mean of 3.84 (*SD* = 1.53) before staff development to a mean of 4.71 (*SD* = 1.19) after it; the mean gain of 0.87 (*SD* = 1.55) on the six-point Likert scale was statistically significant at the 0.05 level.

TABLE 1

Participants' Mean Ratings of Various Aspects of SIG Training Activities[a]

(N = 3,069)

Workshop Qualities	Mean Rating	S.D.	PERCENT SHOWING Positive Response[b]
Organization	5.06	1.12	90
Sufficient Time for Topics	4.55	1.34	76
Sufficient Time for Questions	4.95	1.22	85
Helpfulness of Materials Received	4.83	1.30	85
Applicability to Daily Activities	4.80	1.34	84

Source: Staff Development Survey (Scans)

[a]All responses are based on a six-point Likert Scale where "one" denotes "very little" and "six" indicates a "great deal."

[b]Ratings of 4, 5, and 6 indicate a positive response.

- *Participants favorably evaluated all aspects of the training sessions.*

Training Activities

In order to determine whether participants differed in their evaluation of the various types of staff-development activities, OREA analyzed participants' responses to the school-based workshops, the Third Annual Staff Development Conference, the mini-courses, and the graduate and undergraduate credit bearing college courses offered by SIG. As Table 2 indicates, respondents rated the college courses highest with respect to the amount of time devoted to the subject matter, questions, and discussion of ideas. The helpfulness of materials was rated highest by the participants of the mini-courses. The organization of the workshops and the training's applicability to everyday professional activities were rated similarly highly for the college courses, mini-courses, and school-based training activities.

In general, workshops at the Third Annual Staff Development Conference were perceived as slightly less effective than the three staff development options; participants in these workshops indicated the lowest mean rating in organization, applicability to daily activities, sufficiency of time to address the subject matter and ask questions, as well as the usefulness of materials distributed.

As Table 3 indicates, there were differences in reported knowledge gain among the participants in the four types of staff development options ($F = 23.58$, $p < .01$). Participants in the college courses reported the largest average mean gain in knowledge (2.31 $SD = 1.87$) from a mean level of 2.89 before the training to 5.19 after it, followed by the respondents from the mini-courses; from a mean level of 3.40 to a mean of 5.03, yielding an average mean gain of 1.68 (SD = 1.49). Participants of the Third Annual Staff Development Conference reported the least gain in knowledge. Their knowledge increased from a mean level of 3.85 to 4.65, producing a mean gain of 0.81 (SD = 1.54).

TABLE 2

Participants' Mean Ratings of Various Aspects of Four SIG Training Activities[a]

	TYPE OF ACTIVITY				
	College Course (N = 63)	School-Based Training (N = 209)	SIG Conference (N = 2,757)	Mini-courses (N = 40)	Total[b] (N = 3,069)
Organization	5.55	5.39	5.01	5.58	5.06
(S.D.)	(0.56)	(0.73)	(1.15)	(0.71)	(1.12)
Sufficient Time for Topics	5.54	5.18	4.47	5.03	4.55
(S.D.)	(0.77)	(0.99)	(1.42)	(1.23)	(1.40)
Sufficient Time for Questions	5.84	5.48	4.87	5.73	4.95
(S.D.)	(0.37)	(0.74)	(1.25)	(0.64)	(1.22)
Helpfulness of Materials Received	5.27	5.23	4.77	5.40	4.83
(S.D.)	(0.96)	(0.93)	(1.31)	(1.20)	(1.30)
Applicability to Daily Activities	5.14	5.12	4.76	5.13	4.80
(S.D.)	(1.08)	(0.98)	(1.37)	(1.24)	(1.34)

Source: Staff Development Survey (scans)

[a] All responses are based on a six-point Likert Scale where "one" denotes "very little" and "six" indicates "extensive".

[b] The Ns slightly differ from question to question due to missing data.

- *Participants rated the college courses highest in terms of the adequacy of time devoted to discussion of questions.*

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TABLE 3

The Effect of Four Training Activities
on Participants' Level of Knowledge[a]

Type of Training	MEAN LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE		
	Before Training	After Training	Gain
College Course	2.89	5.19	2.31
(S.D.)	(1.44)	(.92)	(1.87)
(N = 63)			
School-Based Training	4.14	5.14	1.03
(S.D.)	(1.39)	(0.78)	(1.30)
(N = 209)			
SIG Conference	3.85	4.65	.81
(S.D.)	(1.52)	(1.22)	(1.54)
(N = 2,757)			
Mini-courses	3.40	5.03	1.68
(S.D.)	(1.65)	(0.80)	(1.49)
(N = 40)			
Total	3.84	4.71	0.87
(S.D.)	(1.53)	(1.19)	(1.55)
(N = 5,052)			

Source: Staff Development Survey (Scans)

[a]All responses are based on a six-point Likert Scale where "one" denotes "very little" and "six" indicates a "extensive."

- *The mean gain of knowledge for participants is statistically significant ($p < .05$).*
- *Participants in the college courses and the mini-courses reported the largest increase in knowledge as a result of training.*

While these findings elucidate the relative strengths and weaknesses of the various staff development components, one should keep in mind that there were differences in the organizational structure of the different training options. The training activities for the school-based workshops were designed and implemented by the School-Based Advisory Committees to address the interests of a particular school community. They were delivered on school premises, and most often the presenters were colleagues of the participants. In contrast, the mini-courses were organized and administered by District 75/Citywide personnel and offered ten hours of intensive instruction in one specialized topic to a limited number of pre-registered participants in a serial format. The Third Annual Staff Development Conference, and the graduate and undergraduate credit bearing college courses were jointly sponsored by the U.F.T. and District 75's staff development unit. The conference was open to all District 75/Citywide personnel; it was conducted on a Saturday and offered a wide variety of workshops. The graduate and undergraduate college courses were also restricted to preregistered participants who chose to utilize their SIG allotment to earn college credits.

The types of participants at the various training activities also differed. The college courses, mini-courses, and the Third Annual Staff Development Conference were attended by people who had sufficient interest in the subject area to dedicate a considerable amount of time, and/or travel outside their own schools. Participants in the school-based training activities did not have to travel great distances to attend, and School-Based Advisory Committees made efforts to schedule activities to accommodate the needs of their personnel.

IV. CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The District 75/Citywide staff development program funded by a State Incentive Grant to support the improvement of the quality of instruction proved to be a successful and innovative program. The innovative feature of the SIG staff development program was its philosophy of staff empowerment. This philosophy found expression in the consultative process which assured a participant driven program. The 1989-90 program allowed flexibility in content as well as delivery and scheduling of staff training. The content of the school-based as well as the district-administered training activities was based on the professed interests of all school staff. In addition, schools had great latitude in scheduling the training activities as well as hiring presenters.

While most schools offered a complete staff development program, as in previous years the level of participation was limited by scheduling constraints. Scheduling was the most significant factor influencing the level of participation. In spite of the efforts of the School-Based Advisory Committees to ascertain the optimal time for the largest number of staff members by requesting time preference in the interest inventories, the majority of respondents indicated that their participation was restricted by their personal responsibilities. The large number of District 75/Citywide personnel attending the Third Annual Staff Development Conference showed that the conference format, offering a large selection of staff development activities, on a Saturday, publicized well in advance, circumvented some of these problems.

Most participants were satisfied with the training. The voluntary nature of the program, and its emphasis on staff input resulted in a high level of motivation to participate in the staff development activities. A large majority said that the training was

relevant to their work, and they were able to apply what they learned to their daily classroom and/or professional activities. However, an appreciable number of paraprofessionals felt that there were not enough workshop presentations geared to them, and they voiced a desire for more training sessions relevant to their needs.

The conclusions based on the findings of this evaluation lead to the following recommendations.

- Clear guidelines should be established concerning the role of the Central Consultation Committee.
- Clear guidelines should be established concerning the role of the Programmatic Consultation Committees.
- After establishing the Programmatic Consultation Committees, the program should provide training sessions for committee members concerning their roles and responsibilities.
- The Group Processing Workshop should be extended to several sessions in order to accommodate committee members' requests for more practical information about issues arising in the implementation phase of the program.
- In view of the extensive after school responsibilities of personnel, the program should offer more of the activities on weekends in conference form.
- In addition to the joint training activities of teachers, paraprofessionals, and related service providers, the program should provide a number of workshops addressing the specific needs of each of these groups.